women news

Published to promote the goals of
the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies
for the Advancement of Women

No. 1, 1991

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADOPTS RESOLUTIONS ON WOMEN

On 14 December 1990, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Third Committee, adopted six resolutions under the items on its agenda related to women.

45/124 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

In this resolution, the General Assembly welcomed the ratification of or accession to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women by an increasing number of Member States; urged all States that had not yet ratified or acceded to the Convention to do so as soon as possible; and emphasized the importance of the strictest compliance by States parties with their obligations under the Convention. The resolution referred to measures to be taken by the Secretary-General and States parties to ensure the efficient functioning of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. It further requested the Secretary-General to undertake a comprehensive review of the resources available and necessary to ensure the effective implementation of all other aspects of the programme on the advancement of women.

45/125 Improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat

In this resolution, the Secretary-General was urged to continue all possible efforts to increase the number of women throughout the United Nations system, particularly in senior policy-level and decision-making posts, and particularly from the developing countries in view of the small proportion of women from those countries in such posts, in order to achieve an overall participation rate of 35 per cent by 1995. Member States were requested to support the efforts of the United Nations to increase the percentage of women in the Professional category and above.

45/126 Women and literacy

Recognizing that in many countries there was a significant gap between the enrolment and retention levels of girls and boys in basic education programmes, just as there was a gap in literacy between adult men and women, the Assembly, in this resolution, called upon Member States to eliminate *de jure* and de facto barriers to schooling for women of all ages, and to accelerate the participation of women in literacy programmes, particularly in areas pertaining to the improvement of their socio-economic condition, including legal literacy and income-generating and skill-building activities. This resolution also encouraged the Secretary-General to assist Member States in strengthening strategies to target resources to women of all ages, especially those most disadvantaged, and thereby work towards the elimination of illiteracy of women of all ages.

45/127 Interregional consultation on women in public life

In this resolution, the Assembly expressed its concern that the level of participation by women in decision-making in almost all countries was exceedingly low and stressed the importance of women's full participation in the political process at all levels, especially in top decision-making. It decided that the consultation on women in public life should be an intergovernmental meeting and urged all Governments to participate actively in the consultation and for that purpose to designate as participants women who currently held leadership positions in government and national institutions and organizations or who were considered to have the potential for high public office. The Interregional Consultation on Women in Public Life will be held at Vienna from 10 to 12 September 1991.

45/128 United Nations Development Fund for Women

The United Nations Development Fund for Women was commended by the Assembly for its efforts to increase the visibility of women and to ensure that issues relating to women were on the agenda of the mainstream development efforts of Governments, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Governments and public and private donors were urged to continue to extend their support to the Fund through voluntary contributions and pledges to its programmes.

45/129 Implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women

Reaffirming its determination to encourage the full participation of women in economic, social, cultural, civil and political affairs and to promote development, co-operation and international peace, the Assembly urged Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations to implement the recommendations and conclusions arising from the first review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. Stressing the importance of the subtheme "Employment, health and education", it called upon Member States to give priority to policies and programmes relating to the subtheme. The Assembly emphasized the importance of the total integration of women into the development process, bearing in mind the specific and urgent needs of the developing countries, and called upon Member States to establish specific targets at each level in order to increase the participation of women in professional, management and decision-making positions in their countries.

VULNERABLE WOMEN

Under the priority theme "Equality", the Commission on the Status of Women, at its thirty-fifth session, will consider "Vulnerable women, including migrant women". This group includes young women, elderly women, disabled women, migrant women and women heads of household. The term "vulnerable" is applied to these groups as they can all suffer from potential double discrimination.

Expert group meetings and seminars have been held on: migrant women (organized by the Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat, 27-30 March 1990, see *Women News* No. 36, May 1990); disabled women (organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women, United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV/CSDHA), 20-24 August 1990, see *Women 2000* No. 1, 1991); and young women (organized by the Social Development Division (UNOV/CSDHA), 4-8 June 1990, see *Women News* No. 39, October 1990). Furthermore, a meeting on population aging in the context of the family, organized by the Population Division, was held from 15 to 19 October 1990. In order to prepare material for the priority theme as a whole, an Expert Group Meeting on Vulnerable Women was held by the Division for the Advancement of Women, at Vienna, from 26 to 30 November 1990, with special emphasis on women heads of household and integrating approaches to dealing with the issue of vulnerability.

The Meeting was attended by five experts and one consultant, as well as by observers for 14 Member States, 6 bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations system and 16 non-governmental organizations. The Meeting was so organized that the first three days could be devoted to discussing women heads of household and the last two days to the general issue of vulnerability.

The Meeting noted that households headed by women represented a significant and growing proportion of all households and that they were over-represented among the poor. It also noted that an increasing number of women had the sole economic responsibility for their children and other dependants and thus provided valuable and costly services that were not available through society. Recommendations were made that among general policies for women, policy actions should be targeted directly at women heads of household as they suffered from specific disadvantages in addition to those experienced by all women. Such actions should be designed to empower

women heads of household through their participation in the identification of the needs and constraints of such households, as well as in the design and, ultimately, the management of programmes. As well as the provision of specific assistance in the form of social support and welfare, emphasis should be put on giving women heads of household access to credit for production and consumption. Actions to promote employment as well as educational and training schemes should be adapted to the particular needs and constraints of women heads of household, who should be included in sustainable development-oriented actions.

Vulnerability was recognized as a useful concept to pinpoint groups of women at higher risk of becoming disadvantaged, as well as those factors that created situations where women were put at a disadvantage. It was considered important, however, to avoid the idea of victimization, helplessness, passivity and guilt often associated with the concept; the Meeting noted the need to enhance the ability of vulnerable women to contribute to, and benefit from, economic development. It was considered that there was considerable overlapping between the different groups at risk, in terms of both individuals and problems. Disadvantages might accumulate when women belonged to several groups and there were problems common to all groups such as marginalization from society and exposure to violence. Empowering vulnerable women should be seen as the key to designing adequate policies for these groups.

Calendar of meetings January-June 1991

January

ILO: Women's Workshop on Workers' Education Assistance to the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions, Zambia, 6-26 January

ILO: National Policy Workshop on the Role of Women in Wasteland Development, New Delhi, 9-11 January

International Trade Centre (UNCTAD/GATT): Follow-up Seminar on Effective Business Management for Export Marketing, New Delhi, 14-25 January

ILO: Training Course for Women Members of Selected Rural Workers' Organizations, Thuraimangalam, 16 January-5 February

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, tenth session, Vienna, 21 January-1 February

UNESCO: Expert Group Meeting on Women's Challenge to Adult Education, Hamburg, 30 January-1 February

February

FAO: Experts' Consultation on Population, Women and Agricultural Development, Penang, 4-8 February

UNESCO: Regional Workshop for the Conduct of Skills-based Literacy Programmes for Women, Kerala, 4-17 February

INSTRAW: National Workshop on Statistics and Indicators on Women, Venezuela, 7-8 February

ILO: Evaluation of the Impact of Training for Rural Gainful Activities on Women, Kathmandu, 13-15 February

UNESCO: Réunion des partenaires nationaux de lutte contre les pratiques de mutilations sexuelles au Burkina Faso, Ouagadougou, 22-25 February

Commission on the Status of Women, thirty-fifth session, Vienna, 27 February-8 March

ILO: Meeting in the framework of a regional project entitled "Improved livelihood for disabled women", Zambia

UNESCO: Journées d'études sur les perspectives d'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes, notamment en ce qui concerne l'emploi des femmes en Algérie, Oran

UNIFEM: Expert Group Meeting on Women and Food Technology, Quito

ILO: Diversification of Women's Training and Employment in South Asia, Islamabad, late February

March

ILO: Training Course for Women Members of Selected Rural Workers' Organizations, Manila, 3 March-16 April

ILO: Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations; agenda item on the examination of application of ILO conventions concerning women, Geneva, 7-20 March

ECA: Expert Group Meeting to Establish the Modalities for the Creation of a Regional Association of Women Entrepreneurs, Addis Ababa, 8-11 March

ILO: Women's Workshop on Administration and Development of Special Services and Socio-Economic Ventures, Zambia, 10-30 March

UNEP: Regional Assembly for Asia: Women and the Environment, Bangkok, 11-15 March

Inter-Agency Meeting on Women, Vienna, 12-13 March

Division for the Advancement of Women: Seminar on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 18-21 March

INSTRAW: International Consultative Meeting of Experts on Macro-Economic Policy Analysis of Women's Participation in the Informal Sector, Rome, 18-22 March

UNEP: Regional Assembly for Latin America and the Caribbean: Women and the Environment, Quito, 19-22 March

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ECA: Twelfth Meeting of the African Regional Co-ordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development, Addis Ababa, 23-25 March

FAO: Inter-Agency Consultation on Statistics and Databases on Gender in Agriculture and Rural Development, Rome, 25-27 March

ESCAP: East and South-East Asian Subregional Workshop on the Technical Processing of Information concerning Women in Development, Bangkok (two weeks)

ILO: Meeting in the framework of a regional project entitled "Improved livelihood for disabled women", Zimbabwe

INSTRAW: Regional Seminar on Theory and Methodology in Gender Studies, Santo Domingo

UNESCO: Table ronde sur les femmes arabes créatices d'images et à travers l'image dans le cinéma, la télévision et l'art photographique, Fez

UNESCO: National Workshops for the Preparation of Materials for Women with Limited Reading Skills, four countries in Asia and the Pacific, March-June

UNESCO: National Workshops for the Conduct of Skills-based Literacy Programmes for Women, four countries in Asia and the Pacific, March-June

UNIFEM: Regional Workshop on Project Formulation, San José, March/April

First quarter

UNFPA: Advisory Group on Women, Population and Development

April

ESCAP: Forty-seventh session; agenda item on women in development, Seoul, 1-10 April

Division for the Advancement of Women: Regional Seminar on the Impact of Economic and Political Reform on the Status of Women in Eastern Europe and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Vienna, 7-11 April

UNICEF: Seminar on Women as Environmental Conservationists, Resource Managers and Mobilizers, Kathmandu, 19-20 April

UNIFEM: Global National Committee Meeting, Turin, 21-23 April

ILO: Special Services of Rural Workers' Organizations in Asia; agenda item on special services for women rural workers, Kuala Lumpur, 21-30 April

UNIFEM: Strategy Meeting on Women in Industry, Islamabad, 26-28 April

ILO: Workshop on Occupational Safety and Health for Women Educators, Zambia, 28 April-25 May

ESCAP: Regional Seminar of Selected Non-Governmental Organizations, Media and Women's Groups in the Promotion of Desertification Control Technology, Muang Chiang Rai, Thailand

ILO: Meeting in the framework of a regional project entitled "Improved livelihood for disabled women", Botswana

UNIFEM: Violence against Women, Santiago

May

ILO: National Co-ordination Meeting for Women Members of Rural Workers' Organizations in Africa, Kampala, 12-18 May

WHO: Regional Symposium on Women, Health and Urban Policies, Vienna, 13-15 May

Division for the Advancement of Women: Expert Group Meeting on Equal Participation in All Efforts to Promote International Co-operation, Peace and Disarmament, Vienna, 21-24 May

ILO: National Co-ordination Meeting for Women Members of Rural Workers' Organizations in Africa, Accra, 21-26 May

Administrative Committeee on Co-ordination Task Force on Rural Development: 13th meeting; agenda item on report on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women toward the year 2000 for rural women, Nairobi, 22-24 May

ILO: National Co-ordination Meeting for Women Members of Rural Workers' Organizations in Africa, Harare, 27 May-1 June

ECLAC: Twelfth Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean, Buenos Aires

ILO: Communication Workshop for Women with Disabilities, Botswana

INSTRAW: Subregional Workshop on Statistics and Indicators on Women and Development, Mali

UNIDO: Workshop on Women's Participation in Industrial Policy and Decision-making in Latin America, Buenos Aires

June

UNESCO: Second Regional Workshop for the Conduct of Skills-based Literacy Programmes for Women, Viet Nam, 25 June-8 July

FAO: Seminar on Rural Household and Resource Allocation for Development, Santa Lucia

INSTRAW: Global Consultative Meeting to Review INSTRAW Methodological Study on Improving Concepts and Methods for Improving the Compilation of Statistics and Indicators on Elderly Women, New York

UNESCO: Subregional Workshop in Communication Skills for Micronesian Women, Guam

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ISSN No. 1010-8904